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Administrative and budgetary aspects of the financing of the United Nations peacekeeping operations: financing of the United Nations peacekeeping operations

Death and disability benefits

Note by the Secretary-General

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Introduction

1. The information contained in the annex to the present note is submitted pursuant to General Assembly decision 54/459 B as well as the recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions set forth in its reports A/54/782 and A/55/883.

2. In accordance with those recommendations, the present note summarizes the progress made in 2001 in processing death and disability claims (tables A and B). The total number of casualties reported and claims submitted for incidents occurring from 1 January 1997 to 31 December 2001 is presented in table C. Table D indicates the volume and value of claims processed during 2001.

3. In the last annual report, dated 31 December 2001, 90 claims were pending. During the year 2001, 96 claims were received, bringing the total number of claims available for processing to 186. Of those 186 claims, 108 were processed, with 78 claims pending at 31 December 2001. Those 78 pending claims include 46 claims for which documentation is lacking from the troop contributors. Additionally, as at 31 December 2001, of the 78 pending claims, there were 21 claims based on the old methodology. Subsequently, 18 of those claims have been processed, leaving an outstanding balance of three claims based on the old methodology as at 31 March 2002.

I. Process for settlement of death and disability claims

4. The new process for the settlement of death and disability claims was adopted by the General Assembly in its resolution 52/177 of 18 December 1997. The work process begins when a troop contributor submits a claim for death or disability of a contingent member to United Nations Headquarters in New York through their Permanent Mission. A claims officer in the Claims and Information Management Section, Department of Peacekeeping Operations, electronically retrieves the notice of casualty and the Board of Inquiry report. If the Board of Inquiry report is not available at Headquarters, a request to confirm the notice of casualty is sent to the field in order to verify that the incident was in fact service-related. The new methodology has introduced greater simplicity and timeliness, as the troop contributors now need only submit a one-page claim immediately after the incident, whereas with the old methodology troop contributors were required to provide full documentation relevant to their national legislation. For a death claim, the confirmation of notice of casualty is sufficient to process the claim. For a disability claim, a medical report assessing the percentage of disability is required. That report has to be submitted by the troop contributor with the claim and reviewed by the Medical Services Division at Headquarters if necessary. Thereafter, the claim is certified and forwarded to the Accounts Division for settlement.

5. In order to help facilitate and accelerate the process, the Permanent Missions are given instructions on the processing of death and disability claims during the negotiations of memorandums of understanding. Moreover, the claims officers work closely with the military advisers of the troop contributors, providing assistance and training when needed. A delay in processing claims is mostly due to incomplete claims. Some claims may be missing supporting documents, such as payment instructions, that can be obtained in a short time, whereas other problems may take

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much longer to rectify and may result in the claim being rejected. Specifically, when a claim is submitted without substantiating documentation from the field and there is no notice of casualty in the casualty database, nor was the peacekeeping mission aware of the incident, the Claims Section has difficulty in verifying that the injury was service-related or that it occurred while the contingent member was in the peacekeeping mission. Another reason for delays and/or rejection of claims is if the injury is without any resultant permanent disability. If a contingent member is injured in a peacekeeping mission and has no permanent disability after obtaining proper medical care, a disability claim cannot be entertained.

II. Improved efficiency in the processing of death and disability claims

6. The Claims Section has been restructured, by peacekeeping mission, to facilitate the overall processing of claims. The new structure provides claims officers with the ability to deal with the full scope of a mission, specifically requiring them to participate in the full life-cycle of a mission/claim — from the negotiation of the memorandum of understanding, to the verification and processing of all claims generated in the mission, be they in the areas of death and disability, letters of assist or contingent-owned equipment. This structure thus provides each claims officer with a wide range of knowledge of mission operations, thereby increasing their ability to function effectively and efficiently in collecting necessary information, and in being able to quickly analyse and process the data/claim. Prior to the restructuring in November 2001, all claims officers were provided with extensive training in the processing of death and disability claims, based on materials created internally. It is planned to repeat that training in the third quarter of 2002.

7. The Secretariat has carried out an analysis of claims rejected over the past seven years in order to better administer and improve the processing of claims. The data show that 71 per cent of the claims were rejected for lack of substantiating documentation from the field. There are two reasons for this: one is that the injury may have occurred in the peacekeeping mission but was never reported; the second and most common reason is that the contingent member may have submitted a claim to his or her Government after repatriation. Efforts are under way through the Military Adviser's Office to sensitize contingent commanders to make sure that all incidents resulting in injury to personnel are reported via a notice of casualty. Sympathetic consideration is given to death claims and all efforts are made to pay such claims. However, since the special arrangements approved by the General Assembly for certain peacekeeping operations provide for the retention of unliquidated obligations owed to Governments for a period up to five years, claims are rejected when they are submitted later than five years from the date of incident or if they were not service-incurred. Additionally, a claim must not be as a result of pre-existing medical conditions. The Secretariat often sends letters reminding troop contributors to submit claims before the five-year limit expires.

8. With regard to incidents resulting from traffic accidents and aircraft crashes, the activities of the Board of Inquiry often take a long period of time to be completed. To help expedite the settlement of death and disability claims associated with such incidents, the Secretariat has modified slightly the request for notice of

casualty confirmation, allowing the Force Commander to attest that there was no gross negligence or wilful misconduct on the part of the victim without waiting for the Board of Inquiry's investigation to be completed. The Secretariat has noted that the modification has greatly reduced the delay previously experienced with such cases. Moreover, in the case of disability, a percentage of permanent disability cannot be estimated until substantial medical treatment is given. The Secretariat has also slightly modified the request of notice of casualty confirmation for such cases, to allow the Force Commander to confirm that the injury was service-related without giving the percentage of disability, as was the practice previously. However, it should be noted that, owing to the very nature of a disability claim, that is, to allow time and medicine to heal the wound, these claims usually spread out over time. Proper medical treatment must be given before a medical board can assess the permanent disability percentage of an injured contingent member.

III. Request of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions

9. In paragraph 3 of its report dated 3 April 2001 (A/55/883), the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions requested that a column be added to tables A and B of the annex indicating the dollar amount of the claims settled and paid during the specific period. In this connection, table D has been added to the annex in the present report indicating the dollar amount of claims processed for settlement. It should be noted that the dollar amounts for claims received in local currencies reflect the exchange rate on the date the claim was certified for payment, or, as concerns rejected claims, on the date the claim was closed. Out of 108 claims processed during 2001, a total of 71 claims in the amount of $2,982,638 were certified for payment. The remaining 37 claims in the amount of $1,144,841 were not approved. Claims are declined for several reasons, with the main reasons being lack of documentation to substantiate the claim, a pre-existing medical condition, or the absence of a permanent disability.

IV. Conclusion

10. The report on death and disability claims processing was initially required quarterly and was later condensed to an annual report, with the primary intention being to keep track of the backlog of death and disability cases pending processing, particularly those cases that were processed under the old methodology. As stated earlier in the present report, and in the prior year's report, there is no longer any backlog of claims. The new death and disability methodology is working well and is well understood by all concerned parties and the Claims Section has been able to process the claims in a timely manner. In fact, except in the case of the United Nations Peace Forces (UNPF) headquarters where a shortage of cash delayed payment, almost all claims are paid within three months from the date of submission. In the light of the foregoing, the General Assembly may wish to consider whether there is a continuing need for such a report to be provided outside of the framework of the overall claims processing.

V. Action to be taken by the General Assembly

11. It is recommended that the General Assembly consider whether there is a continuing need for the death and disability annual report to be provided outside of the framework of the overall claims processing.

Annex

Death and disability claims processed during the year 2001

A. Annual report for the year 2001 by country

Country	*Claims pending as at 1 January 2001*	*Claims received in 2001*	*Claims processed in 2001*[a]	*Claims pending as at 31 December 2001*[b]
Austria	6	1	6	1
Bangladesh	-	1	-	1
Brazil	-	1	-	1
Denmark	27	-	25	2
Fiji	1	1	1	1
Finland	2	1	3	-
France	7	4	11	-
Ghana	1	2	2	1
Ireland	-	4	4	-
Jordan	1	52	7	46
Kenya	-	2	2	-
Namibia	1	-	-	1
Nepal	2	3	4	1
New Zealand	-	2	2	-
Nigeria	8	10	14	4
Pakistan	-	2	2	-
Philippines	-	2	2	-
Poland	4	-	-	4
Portugal	-	4	4	-
Thailand	-	1	-	1
Uruguay	2	-	1	1
Zambia	28	2	17	13
Zimbabwe	-	1	1	-
Total	**90**	**96**	**108**	**78**

[a] The number of claims processed includes claims that have been approved for payment and those that have been rejected.

[b] A total of 21 of the 78 pending claims are being processed under the old methodology.

B. Annual report for the year 2001 by mission

Mission	*Claims pending as at 1 January 2001*	*Claims received in 2001*	*Claims processed in 2001*[a]	*Claims pending as at 31 December 2001*[b]
MONUA	1	-	-	1
ONUMOZ	-	2	2	-
UNAMIR	5	-	4	1
UNAMSIL	9	47	24	32
UNAVEM	25	4	15	14
UNCRO	13	-	12	1
UNDOF	7	-	6	1
UNFICYP	-	1	-	1
UNIFIL	7	7	11	3
UNIKOM	1	1	1	1
UNMEE	-	1	1	-
UNPREDEP	1	-	1	-
UNPROFOR	20	4	23	1
UNTAET	1	29	8	22
Total	**90**	**96**	**108**	**78**

[a] The number of claims processed includes claims that have been approved for payment and those that have been rejected.

[b] A total of 21 of the 78 pending claims are being processed under the old methodology.

C. Total number of casualties reported and claims submitted for incidents occurring from 1 January 1997 to 31 December 2001[a]

(as at 31 December 2001)

Mission	Fatalities			Injuries and illness			Total		
	NOTICAS received	No. of claims received	No. of claims expected[b]	NOTICAS received	No. of claims received	No. of claims expected[c]	NOTICAS received	No. of claims received	No. of claims expected
MINURCA	2	1	1	1	-	1	3	1	2
MINURSO	2	1	1	4	1	3	6	2	4
MONUA	9	7	2	26	1	25	35	8	27
MONUC	1	-	1	1	-	1	2	-	2
UNAMSIL	48	17	31	112	10	102	160	27	133
UNAVEM	4	1	3	24	-	24	28	1	27
UNDOF	3	2	1	3	1	2	6	3	3
UNFICYP	2	-	2	5	-	5	7	-	7
UNIFIL	29	21	8	240	5	235	269	26	243
UNIKOM	3	1	2	12	2	10	15	3	12
UNMEE	2	1	1	12	-	12	14	1	13
UNMIK	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
UNPREDEP	3	3	-	5	-	5	8	3	5
UNSMIH	-	-	-	1	-	1	1	-	1
UNTAES	5	1	4	23	3	20	28	4	24
UNTAET	15	9	6	51	2	49	66	11	55
Total	**128**	**65**	**63**	**520**	**25**	**495**	**648**	**90**	**558**

[a] Only notifications of casualty received in the past five years are included. It should be noted that claims may be submitted for which no notice of casualty was submitted by the peacekeeping mission. Such claims would be certified using other substantiating documents originating from the peacekeeping mission.

[b] From past experience, it is possible to assume that death claims for all fatalities will be submitted.

[c] On the basis of past experience, permanent disability claims are received for only 20 per cent of the injuries and illnesses reported. On this basis, from the 495 notification of casualty reports received for which claims are yet to be submitted, approximately 99 final claims are expected to be received.

D. Volume and value of death and disability claims processed[a]

Annual report for the year 2001

(United States dollars unless otherwise indicated)

Country	Total no. of claims processed	Death claims		Disability claims	
		Number	Value[b]	Number	Value[b]
Austria	6	-	-	6	377 889
Denmark	25	1	102 366	24	662 142
Fiji	1	1	50 000	-	-
Finland	3	1	50 000	2	1 497
France	11	1	19 611	10	354 483
Ghana	2	1	50 000	1	18 000
Ireland	4	4	200 000	-	-
Jordan	7	-	-	7	102 500
Kenya	2	1	50 000	1	12 500
Nepal	4	3	115 072	1	5 500
New Zealand	2	2	103 952	-	-
Nigeria	14	14	700 000	-	-
Pakistan	2	2	100 000	-	-
Philippines	2	2	100 000	-	-
Portugal	4	4	252 966	-	-
Uruguay	1	-	-	1	18 000
Zambia[c]	17	6	300 000	11	331 000
Zimbabwe	1	1	50 000	-	-
Total	**108**	**44**	**2 .3 967**	**64**	**1 883 511**

[a] Processed claims cover all claims certified for payment as well as rejected claims.

[b] United States dollar amount for claims submitted in the local currency is as of the date of certification or rejection.

[c] Several claims from Zambia had no claimed amount; amount reflected is a close approximation based on their national legislation.